

PURCHASE OF OLDROYD COLLECTION OF LINCOLN RELICS.

FEBRUARY 11, 1909.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state
of the Union and ordered to be printed.

MR. RODENBERG, from the Committee on Public Buildings and
Grounds, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 25550.]

The subcommittee of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 25550) for the purchase of the Oldroyd collection of Lincoln relics, and for other purposes, after a careful consideration of the merits of said bill, made the following report:

By the terms of the bill it is sought to purchase the celebrated Oldroyd collection of Lincoln relics; to acquire by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise, the premises situated in the city of Washington, D. C., known as Nos. 514 and 518 Tenth street, NW.

In 1897 Mr. Sayers introduced a bill providing for the purchase of the house No. 516 in said street, in which Lincoln died, appropriating \$30,000 for said purpose. This became a law, and the relics now owned by Capt. Osborn H. Oldroyd, which had previously been in that building, are now on exhibition there, and are constantly menaced with destruction by fire. It is proposed to remove the adjoining houses mentioned; erect a suitable two-story building on the rear of the three lots and to make the whole as near fireproof as possible. In the general scheme is embraced the purpose to beautify and park the grounds on either side of the building now owned by the Government where the President passed away, giving added security against fire. The plan which has the approval of the War Department and the former Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds, is herewith shown:

This wonderful aggregation of almost priceless souvenirs and reminders of Abraham Lincoln is said to be the greatest and most complete of its kind in existence. It was brought here from Springfield, Ill., where it was located in the Lincoln homestead for years. The collection has attained more than 3,000 pieces, the result of nearly a half century of studiously unremitting work by Captain Oldroyd, who

is regarded as the best equipped Lincoln student now living, so that in the assembling of the relics he could not be imposed upon, his discriminating knowledge barring even an attempt at deception or fraud. This makes the collection bear the seal of authenticity. Each piece forms a unit leading up to the completed story that clusters closely around the matchless figure in human history. The collection also contains a comprehensive library of nearly 1,200 volumes relating to the great martyr and the war, with thousands of almost invaluable clippings, newspaper and magazine files, hundreds of sermons delivered in various parts of the land on the assassination, besides other manuscripts, original letters and papers.

Several very flattering offers have been made by individuals representing different cities to purchase the Oldroyd collection but the owner has declined to consider them as he feels that the United States should acquire it in order to insure its preservation in this historic building at the capital of the nation where it properly belongs.

Many valued souvenirs of the great President are scattered over the country that would find a place in the proposed museum after assurance that a proper fireproof structure has been erected. Owners and custodians of such relics have so indicated. The National Museum has many salient reminders of Lincoln that should and would be added to the main collection.

There is no adequate monument to Lincoln at the National Capital. This would be one full of sentiment of the homely kind. In passing a strong resolution the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, which met at Saratoga, favoring the acquirement of the Oldroyd collection by the Government, it was set forth among other things that no monument could be erected that would appeal to the whole people with as much sentimental force as this proposed memorial.

The committee unanimously indorse that conclusion and recommend that the bill do pass, with the following amendment:

On page 2 of the bill, section 2, strike out all after the words "direction of the" in line 5, and insert in lieu thereof the following: "Secretary of the Treasury."

W. A. RODENBERG.